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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the qualitative component of the 1983-84 Operational Program Reviews (OPRs) of Educational Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) in California's community colleges, this report presents the information collected by a qualitative evaluator at 14 EOPS projects in California and assesses program strengths and weaknesses. The first part of the report provides an overview of the OPR process, which seeks to provide formative evaluation information to EOPS Directors and descriptive data on EOPS students and projects for systemwide aggregation. Information is presented on OPR purposes, methods, and sources of information. The second part of the report contains findings and recommendations, covering: (1) general findings regarding EOPS clientele, eligibility criteria, financial aid, services, and personnel, with descriptions of counseling, tutoring, and recruitment/outreach as the primary services; (2) findings regarding the characteristic ways that various EOPS services are provided within the projects and the relationship of the project to the rest of the college; (3) the qualitative evaluator's recommendations concerning space allocation, tutoring, counselors, outreach/recruitment, and general campus image for each of the 14 colleges; and (4) additional observations with respect to the appropriate use of EOPS resources, the administrative use of EOPS project plans and data, and the need for additional monitoring procedures. (HB)

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FINAL REPORT

EOPS Operational Program Review

Qualitative Evaluations

1983-1984

A REPORT PREPARED FOR THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

June 1984

JC 840 423

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EOPS Operational Program Review:

Qualitative Evaluations

1983-1984

Report written by

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Prepared for the Chancellor's Office,
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Presented to

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June 1984

OVERVIEW

This report highlights findings of the qualitative component of the EOPS Operational Program Reviews conducted during the 1983-84 academic year. The report has two parts. The first consists of background material:

1. What is an Operational Program Review? (pp. 1-3) presents an overview of the OPR -- the purpose, procedures, and report.

2. Methodology (pp. 4-8) describes the specific activities in which the qualitative evaluator engages during the course of the OPR.

The second part consists of findings and recommendations presented as follows:

3. General Findings: What Does EOPS Do? (pp. 9-18) describes the EOPS clientele and eligibility criteria, financial aid, services, and personnel. Counseling, tutoring, and recruitment/outreach are identified as the primary services; each is described.

4. General Findings: How Does EOPS Operate? (pp. 19-29) provides insight into the characteristic ways that various EOPS services are provided within the EOPS projects and the relationship of the project to the rest of the college.

5. Summary of Recommendations (pp. 30-41) provides a table summarizing the qualitative evaluator's recommendations at each of the fourteen colleges visited. Major themes which emerged relate to space allocation, tutoring, peer counselors, outreach/recruitment, and general campus image.

6. Additional Observations (pp. 42-46) presents further perceptions, not specifically part of the recommendations, which emerged from the set of qualitative evaluations. These perceptions are discussed under three headings: (a) the appropriate use of EOPS resources; (b) the administrative use of the EOPS project plan and data; and (c) the need for additional monitoring procedures.

WHAT IS AN OPERATIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW?

An Operational Program Review (OPR) has two purposes:

1. To provide formative evaluation information to the EOPS Director at each college, and
2. To provide descriptive data on EOPS students and projects for system-wide aggregation.

The OPR focuses on the degree to which proposed project activities have been carried out and anticipated outcomes achieved. Each OPR was conducted by a three-person review team that visited the selected college and EOPS project for two days. Each team was comprised of a staff member from the Chancellor's Office (Team Member A), an EOPS director from another college (Team Member B), and a third person with experience or special training in naturalistic observation (Team Member C). The three team members engaged in a variety of tasks -- interviews, observations, and reviews of documents -- to examine the effectiveness of the EOPS project.

The purpose of this report is to aggregate the information collected by the qualitative (or naturalistic) evaluator at fourteen EOPS projects across the state and thereby to provide an overall assessment of EOPS strengths and weaknesses. These fourteen OPRs were conducted between October 1983 and May 1984 at colleges selected at random (using a computer-generated

random number series) and colleges selected for review by the Chancellor's Office staff.

The OPR had both a program activity review and a qualitative component. The program activity review consisted of a highly structured comparison between proposed project activities (as described in the project plan that is part of the EOPS application) and the actual services provided by the EOPS. In contrast, the component of the OPR that is the focus of this report was an open-ended, qualitative assessment of program operations and effects. Team Member C was responsible for this part of the review process. His investigations were guided by responses to a confidential questionnaire completed prior to the OPR by a representative sample of students and staff. Relying primarily on observation of project activities and follow-up interviews with students, faculty and staff, the qualitative assessment tried to identify both positive and negative elements in the EOPS delivery system at the college and to present a brief but comprehensive picture of how the project worked.

The three OPR team members met regularly during the site visit to share their impressions and to cross-validate their observations. At the end of the site visit, they jointly prepared a description of their findings and made specific recommendations for improvement. These findings and recommendations were shared with the EOPS Director and college administrators during an exit interview.

Following the OPR site visit, a qualitative evaluation report was prepared. Thus, there were fourteen final reports, one for each of the fourteen reviews conducted. In the following chapters, the fourteen qualitative evaluation reports are summarized and discussed.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative component of each OPR was conducted by Team Member C, relying on four primary sources of data: (1) preliminary analysis of the EOPS application (project plan); (2) questionnaires filled out prior to the OPR by college faculty and staff, project staff, and students; (3) interviews with a sample of these individuals and with other individuals; and (4) observations of the project during the site visit.

Preliminary Analysis of the EOPS Application

Prior to each site visit, Team Member C read over the EOPS application, with an eye to identifying aspects of the project that were unclear, particularly interesting, or unique. The application provided a general overview of the project -- its activities, staffing, goals, and the like -- which served as a context within which more specific information could be collected through questionnaire analysis and interviews. The organizational chart and staff time allocation tables also included in the application were helpful in identifying the most appropriate people to ask about different aspects of the project.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were designed to elicit the opinions of three groups -- college staff and faculty, EOPS staff, and EOPS students -- on the general questions of how students benefited from the EOPS project at that college, which aspects of the project were effective, which were ineffective, and why.

After the questionnaires had been returned (usually prior to the site visit), they were subdivided by: area of primary responsibility, in the case of faculty and staff questionnaires; and major field of study, in the case of student questionnaires (see Appendix A, Forms C-1 and C-2). The purpose of this analysis was to determine the representativeness of the samples of questionnaire respondents (e.g., to see whether particular staff functions or student majors were over- or underrepresented). Team Member C then made a special point during the site visit of soliciting the views of groups that seemed underrepresented among questionnaire respondents.

Summaries of responses to the questionnaires were then prepared (see Appendix B, Forms C-3 and C-4). From these worksheets, a tentative list of project strengths, weaknesses, and unique features was prepared, and any disagreements or conflicts of opinion were noted. A list of persons, or types of persons, who might best be able to provide further information about questionable aspects of the project was also made. Usually, Team Member C learned more about these issues

and got leads about who would best be able to answer his questions from the briefing with the EOPS project director during the first morning of the site visit (see the guidelines for the qualitative analysis in Appendix C).

Interviews

From six to fourteen staff and faculty members at each college were interviewed during the site visit, to ascertain their opinions about how the project operated and whether it operated appropriately and effectively. The interviews were modeled after the questionnaires; that is, they sought to determine respondents' views of the strengths and weaknesses of the EOPS project and to elicit their suggestions for solutions to problems. In addition, lines of inquiry suggested by comments on the questionnaires were pursued. Often the specific issues under consideration dictated the most appropriate individuals for interview.

Team Member C was not obliged to interview all staff and faculty members, or even those who held the highest organizational risk or had the most seniority. Instead, the choice of interviewees was dictated by the lines of inquiry suggested by the comments on the questionnaires. Frequently, changes in interview schedules were made during the site visits, to include new respondents.

Follow-up interviews were also conducted with from four to ten students at each college. They were asked about their

experiences with the project and about its impact on their academic and personal lives. Issues raised by the students in their questionnaire responses were areas of particular investigation.

Narrative Report

Following the site visit, the qualitative evaluator wrote a narrative report based on his observations and interviews. Guided by the questions "Is it working right?" and "Is it making a difference in participants' lives?" the qualitative evaluator commented on the project's accomplishments, trying to convey some sense of how participants experience the project, to give a voice to differing points of view, or (where appropriate) to express unanimity of opinion.

The qualitative evaluation report itself comprises four main sections: orientation to the project, methodology, findings, and recommendations. The orientation section is a brief overview describing the college setting and the EOPS facilities and staff. It provides a context for the more specific issues raised by the analysis of the EOPS project application, by the questionnaire responses, and by the interview data. The methodology section describes the qualitative evaluation procedures.

In the findings section, the qualitative evaluator lists and characterizes the patterns identified in the earlier analysis of the questionnaires, discusses the unique aspects of

the project, and comments on the prevalent attitudes and perceptions of project participants. Project strengths and limitations as seen by participants are important, as are any disagreements among them.

Finally, the qualitative evaluator summarizes his findings and makes appropriate recommendations about which elements of the project are worth continuing, which need to be strengthened, and which should be changed or eliminated. A sample qualitative evaluation report (with deletions to preserve anonymity) is presented in Appendix D.

GENERAL FINDINGS: WHAT DOES EOPS DO?

EOPS is a federally funded program designed to give low-income students enrolled at community colleges the financial, academic, and psychological support they need to succeed in postsecondary education. This section sketches a general profile of EOPS: its clientele, its financial aid component, its other services, and its personnel.

Clientele

The eligibility criteria for participation in EOPS are spelled out clearly in the Title 5 regulations for the program. To qualify, all students must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. or must have appropriate visa status. They must also be enrolled full time and have applied for a Pell grant. If dependent, students must meet all income limitations and demonstrate that their parents are unable to provide at least half of the financial support they are projected to need. If independent (according to the definition provided in the regulations), they must be unable to provide at least half of their support from their own means. (Independent students on AFDC or Supplemental Security Income are exempted from this provision.) Parents of dependent students may earn no more than $9,999 for a family of four, with thousand dollar increments per additional dependent. Eligibility for participation of independent students is governed primarily by

the fifty percent support rule. Thus, rules governing eligibility of independent students are usually more stringent than for dependent students.

Financial Aid

Given these eligibility criteria, it is not surprising that one of the basic purposes of the EOPS program is to give students financial aid. The means for allocating the financial aid resources available to students differ somewhat from project to project. During this first year of OPRs, four types of financial aid were identified: EOPS grants, book grants, emergency loans, and work-study funds. All projects provide EOPS grants, and most provide book loans or book grants. Less frequently, projects provide work-study money; and in only a few cases are there provisions for emergency loans.

EOPS Services

While financial aid is an important component of the EOPS project package, other services -- counseling, tutoring, and recruitment and outreach -- are just as important.

Counseling. Probably the most important service component, available in all but one of the EOPS projects under review, is student counseling, of which there are three types: academic, financial aid, and personal.

Academic counseling is most widespread and covers four areas. First, students are given general information about college life and about participation in EOPS. Thus, they are informed about program application forms, college deadlines, college activities in which they might be interested, and the location of other services on campus. Second, they are given information on the course requirements for the particular academic programs of interest to them, on the time frame for completing programs, and on the course scheduling necessary to fulfill program requirements. Usually, this course and program-related academic counseling involves semester-by-semester assistance.

Third, many EOPS projects regard the monitoring of the student's progress in coursework as part of their academic counseling responsibility. Such monitoring is sometimes informal: The student simply meets with a member of the counseling staff on a regular basis, and the two converse about how the student is doing. More often, monitoring is more formal and includes computer readouts of the units being carried by the student and of his or her grade point average, as well as regular written reports sent by instructors to the EOPS office. On the basis of this monitoring effort, counselors may refer EOPS students to other college services, such as the tutoring center, the career counseling center, or the re-entry center.

A fourth area of academic counseling relates to opportunities for transfer to four-year colleges. In some

instances, transfer counseling involves no more than giving students information about college entry requirements. In two or three cases, however, transfer counseling goes as far as organized field trips to local universities, where potential transfer students meet with university officials and with representatives of special campus projects. In some instances, EOPS project staff maintain regular contact with university officials on behalf of those EOPS students who have applied for transfer.

Financial aid counseling is found in all the EOPS projects under review. It consists of informing students about the financial aid for which they might be eligible and of helping them to complete the forms and documentation necessary for determining EOPS eligibility and obtaining EOPS and other funding. Much of this financial aid counseling takes place before the student is actually enrolled in the EOPS project; in some cases, it involves high school students who plan to enroll in the community college and apply for entry to EOPS. But financial aid counseling is not limited to the beginning of the school year; it is available throughout the year, since many students have recurring questions and must continue to demonstrate their eligibility for subsequent semesters.

The personal counseling offered by EOPS projects ranges all the way from relatively casual and informal student-staff contact, in which students simply talk about whatever is on their minds at the moment, to professional crisis counseling for students with severe personal, financial, or family

problems. Because many EOPS students come from low-income families that have no experience with college and can give them little guidance in preparing for college life, and because many EOPS students have low self-esteem, personal counseling is regarded as a very important component of most EOPS projects, contributing to the students' persistence and performance in college.

Tutoring Services. The recognition that many EOPS students received inadequate preparation in high school and that they come to college with academic deficiencies and need extra assistance in their classes accounts for the existence of the tutoring services available to EOPS students. At all the EOPS projects examined during the first year of OPRs, this tutoring was provided by peer tutors: students enrolled at the college who had some expertise in the field of study. Most tutoring centers asked the chairpersons of each academic discipline in which tutoring was to be provided to recommend students for employment. Because the salaries paid to tutors were rarely higher than the minimum wage, the centers had some difficulty in retaining a capable and dedicated tutoring staff. However, the OPR also revealed many excellent tutors with broad professional experience. For example, at several colleges, retired engineers enrolled at the community college were serving as tutors in mathematics and science.

The organizational formats for providing tutorial services varied considerably. In some instances, the college offered

tutoring to all students, and EOPS simply referred its students to these services in a systematic manner. In other cases, the EOPS project paid a portion of the total costs of the college's tutoring center or paid the salaries of certain individuals within the tutoring center; this arrangement usually meant that EOPS students had available to them tutoring services beyond the level normally provided to college students. In some instances, the EOPS project maintained tutoring services for its own students; usually these were the only tutoring services available on campus. In all cases the tutoring provided to EOPS students was free of cost to the student.

Recruitment and Outreach. As part of their overall goal of making college attendance a reality for many students who have not previously considered postsecondary education within the realm of their possibilities, EOPS projects maintain a recruitment and outreach effort in their local service areas. This effort is designed to attract such students and to give them the encouragement and information they need in making the decision to attend college. Targeting those areas of the college district that seem to have a preponderance of EOPS-eligible students, EOPS recruiters travel to high schools to meet with counselors and students and may also visit community centers of various types to describe EOPS opportunities to potentially eligible young people.

Some colleges maintain outreach centers, which are usually located in remote areas of the district or in large urban

centers with heavy concentrations of minority and other EOPS-eligible populations, who would probably be reluctant to travel to the community college without encouragement. EOPS projects usually maintain a presence at these college outreach centers, in the form of EOPS personnel who spend a substantial part of their time at the site, meeting with students who may be eligible for EOPS services.

Projects varied considerably in the importance they attached to the recruitment and outreach function. In some cases, this function was carried out by a few staff members over a short period of time; in other cases, it was a year-long activity involving a large portion of the project staff's time.

Summary. The major services offered by EOPS projects are: financial aid (e.g., grants, work-study, book loans/grants, emergency loans), financial aid counseling, academic counseling, personal counseling, tutoring and recruitment. The "personality" of the EOPS projects at different colleges occasionally leads to slightly different service emphases. For instance, some EOPS projects concentrated on establishing and running basic skills or study skills classes, whereas others played an active role in fostering students' cultural awareness.

EOPS Personnel

Administratively, each of the EOPS projects visited had a director (or coordinator) and a project secretary. The director (along with a professional-level assistant in several instances) took responsibility for administering the project. This responsibility included writing the program proposal, maintaining data to demonstrate program compliance, supervising and training members of the project staff, and coordinating project activities and plans with other units on campus. In over half the colleges visited, the EOPS Director was also responsible for the college's financial aids operation. Project administrators were assisted in performing these functions by very able project secretaries, who frequently took personal charge of various minor administrative functions.

In every EOPS project, students had access to a professional counselor. In some projects, these certificated personnel served full time and dealt only with EOPS students. More commonly, one or more certificated counselors divided their time between the regular counseling office on campus and the EOPS project. In only one project we visited did EOPS students have no special access to a designated counselor; as with all other students, their professional counseling was provided directly through the academic departments.

Another element common to most of the EOPS projects visited was the presence of a corps of peer counselors or peer advisors paid by EOPS on an hourly basis. These are students

at the college -- some of them EOPS students themselves -- who act as advisors, friends, and helpers to other EOPS students. They receive project training in advisement and counseling methods and in financial aid procedures, usually through workshops and monthly meetings. In most projects, the peer advisors work more closely with EOPS students than do other project personnel, serving as a link between the students and the project services.

Beyond these mainstays -- which were found in most, if not all, of the projects visited -- there are a variety of other EOPS personnel with a diversity of titles: outreach workers, program specialists, student personnel assistants, and sometimes tutors and tutoring coordinators. While the services provided by these personnel are indicated by their titles, they also perform many miscellaneous services. They constitute a kind of helping hand to the director in all the services that the EOPS project provides.

Another group that must be considered in this discussion of EOPS personnel are those employees of the college who, while not housed directly within the EOPS project, are nonetheless a part of EOPS through the services they provide to EOPS students. Their titles are far too numerous to list here. These are the people who divide their time between EOPS and other services, such as financial aid, tutoring, the career center, the women's center, the re-entry center, and services for the disabled. In some cases, their positions are partially

funded by EOPS, while in other cases, they are funded by the college alone.

GENERAL FINDINGS: HOW DOES EOPS OPERATE?

In the preceding section, various EOPS services (e.g., financial aid, counseling, tutoring) were described. These services are outlined in the program plan which is part of each EOPS project's application. Moreover, these services are present to some degree in EOPS projects throughout the state and thus are fairly well understood. For example, "recruitment/outreach" identifies a kind of activity which has a generally accepted meaning within the EOPS community.

One could say that EOPS operates by providing the services proposed in the project plan and, indeed, these services are present (with minor variations) in the various projects. Rather than simply repeating the earlier functional description, however, it seems appropriate here to give further insight into how EOPS operates by discussing the characteristic ways in which these services are provided within the EOPS project and by examining the relationship of the EOPS project to the rest of the college. In both these aspects, we will highlight the special strengths of the EOPS projects we observed during the fourteen site visits.

Within EOPS

Important factors in the way in which EOPS services are provided within the EOPS project are discussed under three

headings: services emphasis, coordinated services, and sense of belonging.

Services Emphasis. As was mentioned earlier, different EOPS projects differ in their service emphasis. Thus, one project may emphasize the role of the peer advisor, another may focus on financial aid and eligibility requirements, and a third may give highest priority to counseling and tutoring. During the OPRs, no single emphasis emerged as more effective than any other and therefore to be recommended as a model for all EOPS projects.

Similarly, EOPS projects differed in their allocation of responsibility for the provision of services. Associated with these differences was a variability in the responsiblities assigned to different staff members. For example, the particular responsibilities of the peer counselor varied from project to project. Typically, however, peer counselors had a broad range of duties: giving EOPS students general information about the college, orienting them to campus life, and helping them with financial aid procedures and forms. In addition, they often referred students to other counseling services. And in some instances, they provided a kind of crisis counseling, offering "first aid" for personal problems that threatened to impede the student's academic progress. In most cases, the peer counselors were the project's nerve center -- the people to whom EOPS students turned first with questions and problems. Time and time again, students and faculty alike

cited the importance of the peer counselor's attentiveness, flexibility, and availability.

The way in which peer counselors allocated their time also differed somewhat from project to project. In some instances, each peer counselor had an assigned workload of students for whom he or she was solely responsible. In other instances, peer counseling was a group effort, with students handled on a "walk-in" basis. Likewise, there were projects in which peer counselors maintained close, regular contact with EOPS students, instructors, and other college staff, while in other projects, this liason role was assumed by the EOPS director or counselor. The point is that, even though most EOPS projects had virtually the same service components, they differed not only in the relative emphasis they gave to each component but also in the mechanisms and the personnel they used to provide a given service.

Coordinated Services. Observations during the OPR site visits made clear the importance of coordinated services within EOPS. That is to say, EOPS is not simply a collection of services from which students pick and choose. The services are intended and designed to reinforce one another, to provide students not only with the financial aid they need because of their low-income backgrounds but also with the academic support they need because of their poor high school preparation.

This coordination of services was accomplished in a number of effective ways. In some cases, intense personal involvement

was the key: The director or some other staff member made a point of talking to others in the project to verify that the services were, in fact, reinforcing one another and that students were taking advantage of them. In other projects, coordination was achieved through more formal procedures that assured the interdependance of services. For example, a student's progress might be monitored by means of computer checks of class attendance, counseling contacts, use of tutoring services, and so forth. Frequently, the professional counseling and peer counseling services constituted the monitoring mechanism. That is, checking on the progress of individual students and making referrals (for instance, to tutorial services, to the career placement office) were part of the counselor's responsibilities.

Most projects observed during the OPRs demonstrated a clear recognition of the need to coordinate services rather than offering highly discrete service elements. It was this concern for coordination that set EOPS apart from the rest of the college and that gave the EOPS student a sense of belonging not common among community college students.

Sense of Belonging. The sense of belonging we found during the OPRs was not accidental; it was fostered by the very nature of the EOPS project operations. Although not listed in any project plan, the personal factor is what made the difference: the dedication, care and attention that staff members gave to students and the response of students to that

attention. At nearly every college visited, the EOPS students seemed to regard this attention as a service provided by the project. Their appreciation was reflected in such comments as: "the staff takes a personal interest in me"; "I have a friend"; "I feel comfortable within the school"; and "I know that someone cares about me." The caring environment of the EOPS project stands in sharp contrast to the relative impersonality of the regular college milieu. The provision of individualized personal services makes the adjustment to college easier for those nontraditional students -- returning students, older students, single parents, minorities, the handicapped -- who might otherwise feel isolated, outside the stream of college life.

Speculating on the reasons why the sense of belonging is so strong among EOPS students, one might attribute it, in part, to the fact that a separate "space" is available to EOPS students, a place to come for reassurance or just to sit, that is not available elsewhere on campus. Another element which may contribute to the sense of group cohesiveness is the contrast between EOPS students and other students on campus. EOPS participants come from lower-income backgrounds, are often minority group members, and in some cases, are older students, heads of single-parent families, or are distinguished in other ways from traditional college students. The EOPS projects reinforce these differences, but in a positive and personal way.

Within the College

The relationship of the EOPS project to the rest of the college is discussed under four headings: administrative location, coordination of services, contributions to the college, and the EOPS image.

Administrative Location. Because EOPS is such a unique program, many of the colleges visited seemed uncertain about where to place it administratively within the college. This uncertainty is indicated by the substantial variability in the project director's reporting responsibilities. Although all project directors reported to a college dean or assistant dean, in some cases it was the dean of academic affairs; in others, the dean of business affairs; and in still others, the dean of student affairs. In short, there was no single organizational format.

The organizational location of the project seems to have been determined in two ways. In part, it depended on where the EOPS director had previously worked within the college. If he or she had worked in another student service area, then the EOPS project tended to be placed under a dean of student services. In other instances, the project was placed under a business dean or an assistant dean of financial aid for historical reasons.

The other major factor in determining the organizational location of the EOPS project was the college's philosophy about

the EOPS program. If the program was viewed primarily as a system for distributing financial aid, it was housed within the financial aid office or the business division. On the other hand, if the program was seem primarily as a support system for students with special needs, it was housed within the same college division as the regular counseling service.

Clearly associated with the administrative placement of EOPS projects was the physical location. While the amount and type of space allotted to EOPS projects tended to be inadequate, their effectiveness seems to depend more on their location relative to other student services and on the within-project use of available space rather than on the absolute amount of space available. Even where EOPS has been relegated to small or remote quarters, a proximity to the financial aid office, the tutorial center, the counseling service, and so forth, allowed it to function efficiently. Under these conditions, EOPS staff were able to develop the kind of ongoing, face-to-face relationships with other services that were a hallmark of EOPS operations on every campus visited.

Coordination of Services. Several types of EOPS-campus service coordination were demonstrated in various EOPS projects. Where the project was providing a unique service, the concern was to make sure that the service fit in with the college's other offerings. For example, if EOPS was running the only tutorial service available on campus, the project

director wanted to make sure that instructors and counselors on the regular college staff were informed of this service so that they could refer EOPS students to it.

In some cases, the EOPS project worked with other campus units in providing services to EOPS students. Again, tutoring is an example. Frequently, a college-wide tutoring service supplemented its staff with EOPS-funded personnel, thereby yielding extra services to EOPS students: additional time, special tutors, or the waiving of the normal fees charged to other college students. Financial aid is another example of the joint coordination of services. Since financial aid is usually awarded in a "package" made up of different types of aid from different sources, the EOPS project must work closely with the campus financial aid office to assure that EOPS students get an equitable and balanced package that may include grants, loans, or work-study from external as well as EOPS sources.

In still other instances, the EOPS project used available campus services without contributing to their funding; thus, EOPS staff simply helped to facilitate the use of college-provided facilities. For example, all EOPS projects list career transition as an important objective of their program, but few provide their own career transition services. Rather, project staff typically refer EOPS students to the college office handling career transition.

Contributions to the College. Beyond the benefits derived by EOPS students, EOPS projects make a number of significant contributions to their colleges. First, they lessen the burden of demand on many of the regular college services by providing alternative services for EOPS students (e.g., tutoring, counseling, financial aid, help with financial aid forms).

A second contribution relates to the recruitment function. Through its recruitment and outreach effort, the EOPS project often gives the college its major link to local high schools and its only link to community service agencies such as community centers, the state employment office, and welfare agencies. Without the EOPS recruitment effort, some colleges would, in effect, have little or no opportunity to recruit in their service area. The colleges tend to justify this broadened EOPS role in recruitment on the grounds that recruiters cannot restrict their efforts to potential EOPS students alone because eligibility for EOPS cannot be fully determined until the application procedures are begun.

A third contribution is that, through the communication maintained between peer counselors and classroom instructors, EOPS draws the attention of regular college faculty to marginal students. Many instructors who completed questionnaires prior to the OPR qualitative visits noted that, because of this contact with peer counselors, they had become more aware of the presence of EOPS students in their classes and monitored their progress more closely (although they did not necessarily give EOPS students a greater share of their teaching time).

Presumably, increased feedback on the progress of EOPS students leads to a greater possibility of remediating academic deficiencies and, at the same time, provides motivation to those students who receive special attention.

The final contribution made by EOPS projects -- and one that represents a summation of all the services they provide -- is an increase in the college's retention of marginal students. EOPS participants are the kind of students who often drop out of college for financial and other reasons. Through its many services, the project keeps them in college and thereby contributes to the college's overall retention record.

The EOPS Image. A final aspect of the EOPS role within the college pertains to its campus image, which was a matter of considerable concern to EOPS personnel at all the colleges participating in the first year of OPRs. Virtually all EOPS staff members interviewed said they wanted to avoid the negative stigma that often attaches to a program serving predominantly low-income students in a college that enrolls predominantly middle- or upper-income students or a program serving minority students in a college that is predominantly Anglo/white in composition. They did not want to see EOPS students segregated or stigmatized. The situation is complicated by the fact that the EOPS project provides special services to students with academic deficiencies. Many projects attempt to avoid these "labeling" problems by integrating their

services with those of the regular college as fully as possible.

In those instances where such integration is impossible or not preferred -- or where the EOPS project operates its services more or less independently of other college services -- the staff makes a special effort to publicize EOPS services and activities in such a way as to promote a positive image on campus. Often, however, the image problem persists. In many cases, it is attributable to a lack of understanding or a lack of awareness. Because the EOPS project is simply not known on campus, students who might otherwise qualify for the services are never able to take advantage of them. However, the Operational Program Reviews revealed no instances where a general lack of visibility or a negative image in any way impeded the internal operation or effectiveness of the EOPS project or reduced its ability to work well with other agencies on campus in the provision of specific student services.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW CAN EOPS BE IMPROVED?

The qualitative evaluation reports for each of the fourteen colleges visited during the first year of OPRs included recommendations. These recommendations were derived from questionnaire results, from interviews, and from the observations of Team Member C. Table 1 summarizes these recommendations, by college and by category or area: space, project administration, counselors, peer advisors, and so forth. While these categories are roughly the same as the categories of activities proposed in the EOPS application, several categories were added, on the basis of deficiencies observed during the OPRs. The categories receiving most attention in the recommendations are discussed in the remainder of this section.

Tutoring

Recommendations about tutoring were made to eleven of the fourteen projects. As noted earlier, tutoring services are essential to EOPS projects, given the student population they serve. Tutoring services must be available, must have adequate space, must have a well-trained and well-supervised corps of tutors, and must be efficiently coordinated with other EOPS services such as counseling and academic advisement. The recent fiscal problems of colleges have complicated the situation. Many colleges have reduced and even eliminated

their tutoring services. On some campuses we visited, the only tutoring services available were those offered by the EOPS project. In such cases, the recommendations urged colleges to join in the provision of tutoring. In other cases, where it was not entirely clear whether the EOPS resources expended for tutoring benefited EOPS students only or were used to help support college-provided tutoring services available to all students, we recommended greater college-wide support for tutoring services, along with closer project control of EOPS resources in this area.

Peer Counselors/Advisors

As previously noted, the peer counselor/advisor function constituted a valuable service in virtually all the projects visited, permitting individualized monitoring and assistance to EOPS students for a relatively small dollar investment (since peer counselors are usually paid at the minimum wage level). Recommendations to five colleges pointed out that, when student workers are used to perform functions of this type, they must be given adequate training. In two other cases, we urged projects to institute a peer counseling component where none existed. Finally, we noted the need for greater within-project systematization of all peer-related procedures and duties.

Outreach/Recruitment

The EOPS program as a whole emphasizes the identification and recruitment of potential students who are EOPS-eligible but who, because of their disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and poor high school preparation, may not even consider going to college without substantial encouragement. The majority of EOPS projects visited seemed to perform this function well. But the nature of the high school and community recruitment task makes it inherently difficult to determine the extent to which the effort is successful, especially in terms of EOPS enrollment alone. Therefore, our recommendations in this area called for better documentation of the EOPS outreach/recruitment activities (e.g., contacts, follow-ups, etc.) and, where EOPS recruitment was the college's major off-campus effort, a sharing of its cost with the college. In several instances, we also suggested an expansion of the project's outreach/recruitment effort (i.e., that the project look beyond the high schools as a source for future EOPS students).

Counseling

The importance of professional counseling for EOPS students is most visible in the area of academic advisement. Counselors are the most reliable source of information on course content, program requirements, transfer procedures, etc. Hence our recommendation, in two cases, that EOPS hire a full-time counselor for EOPS students, and our recommendation,

in two other cases, that the services of the EOPS counselor be made available to all EOPS students on a more equal basis. We also pointed out to several projects the need to maintain accurate up-to-date records of student-counselor contacts.

Space

The qualitative evaluation reports on five of the fourteen colleges visited included specific recommendations on the space allotted to the EOPS project. EOPS projects were sometimes housed in fairly cramped quarters, often in "temporary" buildings and at locations remote from the center of campus. The rationale for this space assignment was that EOPS is a "temporary" project (not part of the regular college program). Other special projects (e.g., for veterans, for the disabled, etc.) seemed to suffer the same fate.

EOPS projects were not always placed in temporary space, of course. When the college regarded the project primarily as a financial aid program, for example,it was placed within the same complex as the financial aid office (which was sometimes itself located in a remote and poor-quality building and sometimes centrally located). Frequently, even in such instances, the amount of space allotted to the EOPS project was inadequate.

While most of the recommendations on project space emphasized the need for new or improved space, some noted that the current space situation could be improved by better use of

existing facilities. In no way does this obviate the primary need for more space. Specifically, the peer counselors need more space -- and more privacy -- because they deal with EOPS students on sensitive matters.

Campus Image

At some of the colleges visited, the EOPS project suffered from an image problem. For instance, it was perceived pejoratively as a "minority program" (even when relatively few minority students actually participated). At other colleges, the EOPS project was simply not well known. Thus, it was recommended that an active campaign be mounted to acquaint the rest of the campus with the activities and contributions of the EOPS project.

Table 1

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

	College A	College B
1. Space	Provide more office space for EOPS partners. Need room for files on individual students; need more privacy when talking with students.	Additional space must be found for the peer advisors. Confidentiality is eroded by crowded conditions of the EOPS office.
2. Project Administration (EOPS Director)		EOPS Director should become more personally involved in staff training and day-to-day activities.
3. Counselors		
4. Peer Advisors		
5. Tutoring	Work with Learning Assistance Center (LAC) to formalize exchange of info. between tutors, partners, instructors, counselors with respect to students' progress; work with LAC to identify adequate, stable areas for tutoring process.	Monthly reports from Tutorial Center should be circulated among peer advisors to improve their information on students' academic progress.
6. Outreach/ Recruitment		O/R effort should place more emphasis on community groups and public agencies as sources of potential EOPS students.
7. Financial Aids		
8. Basic Skills Courses		
9. Book Loan/ Grant Program		
10. Transition to Four-Year College/ Work	Develop concrete transition-to-work component using state EDD and local employees.	
11. Campus Relations/ Image		
12. Other		Bi-semester faculty progress reports on EOPS students should begin earlier in the semester; should carry name of each student's peer advisor. Addition of a third report during semester should be considered.

Table 1 (cont'd.)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

	College C	College D
1. Space		Improved space for the program is badly needed.
2. Project Administration (EOPS Director)		
3. Counselors		
4. Peer Advisors	Institute more structured peer advisor training; retain current advisors in 1984-85; expand scope of peer advisor responsibilities.	
5. Tutoring	College must contribute to tutoring effort; EOPS is placed in unfair position of turning away students who need help.	
6. Outreach/ Recruitment		
7. Financial Aids		
8. Basic Skills Courses	Institute regular Basic Skills course; current informal and voluntary "seminar" is insufficient.	
9. Book Loan/ Grant Program		Improved procedures for administering the book loan program are required.
10. Transition to Four-Year College/ Work		
11. Campus Relations/ Image		Need to improve campus image through better internal project communication, campus relations activities, administrative support.
12. Other		Need greater congruence between actual program operations and program plans. This would improve program image, staff communication, and basis for personnel management and evaluation

Table 1 (cont'd.)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

	College E	College F
1. Space		
2. Project Administration (EOPS Director)		
3. Counselors		
4. Peer Advisors	Feedback regarding students' academic/personal progress from advisors to the EOPS Center and faculty could be systematized.	Training & job-start happens too late in quarter. Need better documentation that required no. of appts. are being kept. Advisors should not be responsible for Multi-Culture Center info. But job responsibilities within EOPS should be expanded
5. Tutoring		Tutoring is good; but could be improved in areas of better quality tutors (low pay) and more flexible hours.
6. Outreach/ Recruitment	On-campus recruiting effort through campus newspaper and faculty could be strengthened.	More extensive recruitment could benefit program; better documentation of high school visits and resultant recruitment; use peer counselors.
7. Financial Aids		
8. Basic Skills Courses		
9. Book Loan/ Grant Program		
10. Transition to Four-Year College/ Work		
11. Campus Relations/ Image	EOPS profile may be too low; faculty expressed interest in more information and contact with EOPS Center.	
12. Other		

Table 1 (cont'd.)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

	College G	College H
1. Space	Re-order/rearrange EOPS office space (e.g., privacy for peer advisors).	Utilize EOPS office space more efficiently. Physically separate EOPS and Financial Aid offices.
2. Project Administration (EOPS Director)		
3. Counselors	Need full-time EOPS counselor.	Re-focus EOPS staff on EOPS students; as it is, they spend far too much time on processing paper for non-EOPS-eligible students.
4. Peer Advisors		
5. Tutoring	Urge College to assume fair share of tutorial administration costs.	Push for tutorial space.
6. Outreach/ Recruitment		
7. Financial Aids		
8. Basic Skills Courses		
9. Book Loan/ Grant Program		
10. Transition to Four-Year College/ Work		
11. Campus Relations/ Image		
12. Other		

Table 1 (cont'd.)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

	College I	College J
1. Space		
2. Project Administration (EOPS Director)	Fill available EOPS positions; lack of staff hurts delivery of services. Restrict EOPS staff to EOPS services and activities only; eliminate EOPS funding for non-project positions that don't serve EOPS students.	Work with college administration to define appropriate role and administrative location for EOPS.
3. Counselors		Urgent need for full-time EOPS-only counselor, or at least regular EOPS access to single college counselor.
4. Peer Advisors		Consider alternatives to current peer counselor training requirements.
5. Tutoring		Tighter control over access to EOPS tutoring, or share the cost with the college.
6. Outreach/ Recruitment		More off-campus recruitment/outreach.
7. Financial Aids		
8. Basic Skills Courses		
9. Book Loan/ Grant Program	Make book monies available earlier in the academic term.	
10. Transition to Four-Year College/ Work		
11. Campus Relations/ Image		More campus-wide publicity of EOPS services, and more frequent contact with faculty.
12. Other	Academic progress monitoring system needs to be kept current if it is to serve its purpose.	Academic progress monitoring system should be made more frequent, more effective.

Table 1 (cont'd.)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

	College K	College L
1. Space		
2. Project Administration (EOPS Director)		
3. Counselors	Provide all EOPS students with equal access to the EOPS counselor.	Improve record-keeping on student-counselor contacts.
4. Peer Advisors	Re-activate peer advisor component; make them available to all EOPS students.	Consider instituting peer counselor component.
5. Tutoring	Share cost of tutoring coordinator with college. Increase numbers of tutors. Stabilize tutoring budget.	Take greater advantage of available tutoring on campus.
6. Outreach/ Recruitment		Focus outreach/recruitment on EOPS-likely students only, or share its cost with college and Financial Aids.
7. Financial Aids	Re-direct project funds from direct aid (e.g., grants) to other project support services.	
8. Basic Skills Courses		
9. Book Loan/ Grant Program		
10. Transition to Four-Year College/ Work		
11. Campus Relations/ Image		
12. Other	Consider ways of spreading Summer Readiness Program services and personnel among more EOPS students.	

Table 1 (cont'd.)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

	College M	College N
1. Space		
2. Project Administration (EOPS Director)	Major changes in project staff needed.	
3. Counselors	Provide equal access to EOPS counselor for all segments of EOPS population.	
4. Peer Advisors		Reduce peer counselors' office support functions and expand their responsibilities vis-a-vis students.
5. Tutoring	Need for more training and supervision. Need to resolve site and logistic problems.	Greater centralized EOPS assignment and supervision of EOPS-funded tutors. More on-going training needed. Limit EOPS tutors to EOPS students.
6. Outreach/ Recruitment	Expand to full-time position; increase duties; allow more flexible schedule.	Greater EOPS emphasis needed; or share cost of recruitment with college and Financial Aid.
7. Financial Aids		Re-examine procedures that link financial aid to in-term academic progress.
8. Basic Skills Courses		
9. Book Loan/ Grant Program		
10. Transition to Four-Year College/ Work		
11. Campus Relations/ Image		
12. Other	Better and more comprehensive follow-up procedures needed for students with academic problems.	

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

In addition to the recommendations made in the qualitative reports, several other points about ways in which the operation of the EOPS projects might be improved emerged from the observations made during the OPRs. These points are discussed under three headings: (1) the appropriate use of EOPS resources; (2) the administrative use of the EOPS project plan and data; and (3) the need for additional monitoring procedures.

The Appropriate Use of EOPS Funds

As was pointed out in an earlier section, joint coordination of services was a common practice at the colleges visited. That is, the EOPS project worked with other campus units to provide services to EOPS students. Tutoring is an example. Frequently, the EOPS project paid the regular college tutorial service for the tutoring provided to EOPS students. In such instances, however, there was a clear failure to demonstrate that the tutoring services provided were "over and above" normal college services. Similarly, the EOPS project might pay a portion of the salaries of personnel operating the college's career placement center. But again, the evidence indicates that, in many institutions, EOPS students would have received the same or similar service from this career placement center had they not been in the program. When questioned on

this point, college officials tended to say that the expenditure of EOPS funds was justified because of the greater quantity (and, sometimes, the higher quality) of services available to EOPS students. Nonetheless, most projects did not collect the data needed to substantiate their claim that EOPS students received services "over and above" those available to all college students. If EOPS projects continue to spend their funds on such joint services, they must maintain a more adequate record-keeping system to justify this expenditure.

The Administrative Use of the Project Plan and Data

The application form prepared by EOPS projects each year includes a project plan listing proposed activities and functions. All too often, this project plan was viewed by EOPS personnel as so much paperwork -- an administrative requirement for receiving funds from the Chancellor's Office -- rather than as a working document to be used in managing and assessing project operations during the course of the academic year.

As a result, actual activities and functions frequently deviated from what had been set forth in the project plans. The most common kinds of deviations involved shifts in staff responsibility, changes in staff functions, and failure to hire specified staff. Indeed, there were some cases in which functions written into the project plan had never been implemented at all. Project personnel were either unaware that the function had been proposed or simply dismissed it as no longer part of the project.

To be sure, some deviations from the project plan were beyond the control of project staff. A district budget freeze, the loss of key personnel, a change in instructional philosophy, and so forth, may be regarded as extenuating circumstances for the failure to implement proposed activities. But even in such cases, the project director has a responsibility to inform the Chancellor's Office of the changes and the reasons for them. After all, funds are granted in response to a specific plan and with the implicit understanding that the activities and functions proposed in that plan will be actualized. This is not to say that changes cannot be made, within certain established limits, in accordance with district preferences. But it is vitally important that the project plan be viewed by all EOPS staff members as a contract to be fulfilled or modified, but not ignored.

On a related matter, EOPS projects routinely provided various descriptive data to the Chancellor's Office. Collection of such information should not be viewed simply as an administrative obligation but instead as an opportunity to learn more about the project. For example, we noted that several of the colleges visited during the OPR visits were unable to supply information on EOPS student retention or units attempted and completed. Similar, if not identical, data are reported to the Chancellor's Office as a part of the student data system. Data about a project's operations can, and should, be used to effect improvements.

Need for Additional Monitoring Procedures

The third observation relates to the apparent value of the Operational Program Review to the Chancellor's Office. At present, project applications are reviewed at the Chancellor's Office prior to funding, but this review does little more than indicate the extent to which the college has complied with Chancellor's Office regulations regarding the nature of the project and answer other procedural questions. The OPRs give additional information and insight, enabling Chancellor's Office staff to understand the nature and operation of the EOPS projects more fully and to identify areas in which specific projects are not functioning as effectively as they might be.

Current plans call for approximately 20 Operational Program Reviews per year. This means that a given college will be subject to an OPR only once every five years. Thus, some intermediate kind of assessment procedure is needed. Any such procedure should lend itself to being carried out by Chancellor's Office staff and should enable them to determine the extent to which the activities and functions proposed in the project plan are being implemented. For instance, a staff member might be assigned to read over the program plans and then to carry out on-site or telephone interviews with relevant campus personnel. Such an interim procedure might bring to light those deviations from the project plan, as well as other deficiencies in project operation, that would eventually be revealed by the more rigorous Operational Program Review.

Summary

These additional observations are intended to suggest other ways, beyond those suggested in the recommendations, for improving the operations of EOPS projects.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Form C-1: Faculty/Staff Tally by "Primary Area of Responsibility"

Faculty and College Staff:

Primary Area of Responsibility	Number of Respondents*
Math/Science	
English/Language	
Vocational Education	
Health/Physical Education	
Social Science	
Fine Arts	
Student Services	
Administration	
Other	

EOPS Staff:

Primary Area of Responsibility	Number of Respondents*
Tutoring	
Counseling	
Administration	
Outreach	
Other	

*Are there sub-groups of staff apparently not represented in the set of questionnaires you received?

_____ Yes _____ No

If "Yes," what sub-groups are not represented (or are under-represented)?

_____

_____

Form C-2: Student Tally by "Major Area of Study"

Major Area of Study	Number of Respondents*

*Are there sub-groups of students apparently not represented in the set of questionnaires you received?

_____ Yes _____ No

If "Yes," what sub-groups are not represented (or are under-represented)?

_____

_____

Appendix B

Form C-3: Grid for Analyzing Faculty/Staff Questionnaire Responses

Question#

Respondents	1	2a	2b	3a	3b
	In what ways do you feel the EOPS project has been of greatest benefit to students?	Describe one part of the EOPS project here that you feel works well	Why do you think it's effective?	Describe one part of the EOPS project here that is in need of improvement.	Why do you think it needs to be improved?
P.A.R.:* _____ Name: _____					
P.A.R.: _____ Name: _____					
P.A.R.: _____ Name: _____					
P.A.R.: _____ Name: _____					
P.A.R.: _____ Name: _____					
P.A.R.: _____ Name: _____					
P.A.R.: _____ Name: _____					

*P.A.R. = Primary Area of Responsibility

Form C-4: Grid for Analyzing Student Questionnaire Responses

Respondents	Question # 1	2a	2b	3a	3b
	In what ways do you feel the EOPS project has been of greatest benefit to students?	Describe one part of the EOPS project here that you feel works particularly well.	Why do you think it's effective?	Describe one part of the EOPS project that is in need of improvement	Why do you think it needs to be improved?
M.A.S.* _____ Name: _____					
M.A.S. _____ Name _____					
M.A.S. _____ Name: _____					
M.A.S. _____ Name: _____					
M.A.S _____ Name: _____					
M.A.S. _____ Name: _____					
M.A.S. _____ Name: _____					

* M.A.S = Major Area of Study

Appendix C

PROCEDURES FOR QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

Analysis of Questionnaire Responses *

What to do:

Read each questionnaire response carefully.

Use Forms C-3 and C-4 (attached) to summarize the responses to the questionnaires.

In the left-hand column of Forms C-3 and C-4, place respondents together by sub-groups as determined prior to the OPR. (For example, try to keep all the counseling staff responses together.) Enter the name of the respondent in the appropriate row of the grid if they have signed their questionnaire.

Summarize each respondent's answer to all five questions in only a word or phrase and enter in the appropriate blank squares of the grid. (You may leave some squares empty if the respondent did not address the question.)

When you have finished summarizing the responses, read through all the grid entries. In doing this, look for two things:

-- Patterns --

For example,

Do you find that most of the respondents answer a question in much the same way? In other words, is there unanimity in how all students experience a project activity or in the good or bad things all staff members say about how a project component works?

Are there differences in how sub-groups of EOPS staff or students view an issue or component? As an example, are EOPS staff happy about a project component and students dissatisfied? Or, does one sub-group of staff say one thing about a component and a second sub-group yet another?

* Excerpted from Operational Program Review Handbook: OPR Supplement, Team Member C.

-- Unique Items --

Responses which are unique because they describe an activity not mentioned elsewhere.

Responses which are unique because they offer a different perspective on some activity than has been mentioned by others.

Jot down any patterns or unique perspectives you have noticed.

On the basis of your analyses of the questionnaires (and of the questions you posed when you read the project application), make a list of the kinds of issues (activities, points of view) you wish to discuss with persons on site and a tentative list of staff and students who would seem best suited to answering your queries. If there are specific people to whom you would like to speak, coordinate this request with the local EOPS Director during the Planning Meeting on the first morning of the site visit.

Think about the questions you wish to raise in each of the interviews you will schedule. These are meant to help you probe the issues you have identified as being important for project staff. You will want to focus on how they feel the project operates and whether it does so in appropriate ways. Typical questions might include: "Do you think you are reaching the potential EOPS population?"; "Have you developed the most suitable counseling (outreach, recruitment, etc.) strategy for your areas?" For students, you are primarily interested in how they experience the program and what impact it seems to be having on their academic and personal lives. The followng are typical questions: "Would you have gone to college without the EOPS project?"; "Have you done better in school than you would have without EOPS?"; "Did the EOPS project have an effect on your job prospects?"

Appendix D

THE QUALITATIVE EVALUATION REPORT

Program Setting

College "F" is located in the foothills of the city. The college is on the north side of the College District.

(college description -- location and EOPS service area -- deleted)

Physically, the EOPS program occupies a portion of a building which it shares with the Financial Aids office and the Veteran's counselor. At this office, EOPS students receive academic and personal counseling, financial aid information, information about college services and requirements and about transfer procedures to four-year colleges. The EOPS Director, program assistant, counselor, and a peer-counseling office are housed in the Financial Aids building. In addition, the program uses some space in the Multi-Culture Center located in the adjoining cafeteria building. Peer counselors use two desks in a portion of the Center; they apparently supervise the Center, provide general information, and use the location for some of their student counseling.

The location of the EOPS offices is excellent. The Financial Aids building is near the central part of campus and directly in the flow of student traffic. And, the Multi-Culture Center is a separate room at the end of the cafeteria building next door. At both EOPS offices, there are a stream of students and peer counselors. The amount of space appears to be adequate, but the dual location does impose difficulties. Student files are all maintained in the program assistant's office, and if peer counselors meet with students while in the Multi-Culture Center, they must walk back to the main office to get the folder and afterwards, to return it.

Methods Used in the Qualitative Evaluation

The qualitative evaluation attempts to draw from the perceptions of faculty, staff, and student participants to sharpen views of how individuals experience the project. In the qualitative portion of the study, the evaluator tries to gain understanding of the project as a whole without specifically focusing on activities and their performance or non-performance. Instead, the evaluator allows issues to emerge from the comments of people describing their own experiences, satisfactions, and concerns.

The qualitative evaluation of the project was based upon three primary sources of data: preliminary analysis of the EOPS application (program plan); questionnaires filled out by college faculty, project and college staff, and students prior to the OPR visit; and interviews with a sample of individuals

during the two days of the actual site visit.

Preliminary analysis of the EOPS application. Prior to the site visit, the EOPS application was studied in order to generate a series of questions about aspects of the project which were unclear or aspects which were particularly interesting, unique, or well thought out. The application provided a general overview of the project, its activities, staffing, goals, and the like, which were to serve as the context for more specific information to be collected through questionnaire analysis and interviewing.

Questionnaires. Questionnaires were intended to elicit the opinions of college staff and faculty, EOPS staff, and EOPS students regarding the general issues of how students benefited from EOPS and what aspects of the project were effective and which ineffective, and why. At College "F," the EOPS Director provided 16 questionnaires which had been filled out by EOPS staff and faculty. In addition, 21 questionnaires were provided which had been completed by EOPS students.

After receipt, the questionnaires were subdivided into primary areas of responsibility for staff and faculty and major areas of study for students. Summary accounts of respondents' answers to the questions were prepared. A tentative list of project strengths, weaknesses, disagreements, unique features, perceptions, and attitudes was thereby created, as well as a list of the persons, or kinds of persons, best able to provide further information about these aspects of the project.

Interviews. Individual interviews were carried out with six staff and faculty members at College "F" and four peer counselors. These interviews focused on how EOPS operated and whether interviewees felt it did so in an appropriate way. The interviews were focused on the general questions presented in the questionnaire. That is, they sought to determine respondents' views of strengths and weaknesses of the program and to elicit a wide spectrum of suggestions for problem solutions. In addition, lines of inquiry suggested by comments on the questionnaires were pursued. Often the consideration of specific issues dictated who might be the most appropriate individuals to interview.

To obtain the student "point of view," follow-up interviews were conducted individually with eight students. For the students, the interviews were concerned with how they experienced the project and what impact it seemed to have on their academic and personal lives. Items raised by the students in the questionnaire responses were areas of particular investigation. Prominent areas of inquiry included: satisfaction with the program, perceived problems, satisfaction with counseling services, tutoring services, and campus-wide perception of the program.

Findings

A number of positive patterns emerged from the student findings. Clearly, the EOPS program at College "F" provides students with financial aids which for a high proportion of

EOPS students are, quite literally, the difference between staying in college and dropping out. In addition, the program provides a set of effective support services: counseling, tutoring, orientation, etc. However, the contribution of EOPS is more than the program's formal system of orientation, financial aid, and academic assistance; as important an element is the personal, informal involvement of EOPS staff.

With respect to specific comments, the function that was mentioned most was staff assistance and counseling. Students are very impressed with the services that they receive. The counseling function and the performance of the staff are undoubtedly great strengths of the EOPS program. The theme of staff assistance (director, counselor, and program assistant) was repeatedly noted:

"the staff takes a personal interest";
"I feel comfortable";
"I have a friend";
"the one-to-one counseling";
"they make me feel comfortable";
"I know that I have a friend";
"the staff tries hard";
"the staff lets students know that they care."

One student perhaps summed it up best with the statement: "Students need to know that they can 'make it' in college and that they have the support of our staff. Once EOPS students believe in themselves and are willing to work, EOPS provides the services to help them succeed."

A further example: One student told me in an interview that she was new here this semester and had gone to a College counselor. She was confused...still not adjusted to college.

The counselor asked her what her major was, and she told him she "was confused" and hadn't yet decided her major. She related to me that the counselor laughed at her, and she was so crushed that she simply couldn't go back to him. Subsequently, she got into the EOPS program, has built a tremendous relationship with the counselor there, is now beginning to feel comfortable with school, and says she is doing fine. These individual cases may sound like trivia...who cares about one student. But it is this kind of thing from which we can generalize about the program.

A second area identified as a strength was the emergency loans. The students were really quite impressed with the way these were handled. This was noted in the questionnaires and in my follow-up interviews with them. I must say I was impressed as well with the way in which the emergency loans were facilitated. When emergencies arose, things happened; it wasn't something that dragged on for a few weeks. The EOPS Director and the Assistant Dean for Financial Aids (and I am sure, others as well) managed to get money to the students in 24 to 48 hours. At a time of crisis, this was an identifiable part of the EOPS program that students appreciated and felt good about.

A third element that students particularly appreciated about the EOPS program was the provision of tutoring. Students felt very appreciative of the fact that the EOPS program provided these services to them at a time when tutoring

services were being cut back throughout the college. I interviewed the Tutoring Coordinator and, based on this discussion, it's my understanding that regular students on the campus are restricted to one hour per week of tutoring, while EOPS students basically are able to charge against the EOPS budget. There are no time restrictions except for those difficulties which might emerge in scheduling. Likewise, there were many favorable comments about the tutors; how helpful they were, how they tried, knew their material, and so forth.

Issue...Tutoring. This EOPS service is clearly a strength in that students have services available that other students do not have. But, on the other hand, like many things "good," it sometimes turns out to be a weakness as well. If you like something, you're disappointed if you don't get enough of it, and students expressed the concern that, while they were satisfied with the service and pleased with the assistance provided, they felt the need for more. There were a fairly substantial number of comments (including those in follow-up interviews) about the desire for more and better tutoring. Part of this apparent contradiction is easy to explain: there are only so many hours in the day. Thus, it may not be physically possible to meet students perceived tutorial needs. I also suspect that some of the perceived problem will be alleviated now that the Tutoring Coordinator works full time. Presumably, now that she is in the Tutorial Center for more hours, she will be able to schedule over a wider period of time each day.

With respect to the question of tutor quality, part of the deficiency is attributable to the fact that the Center is, after all, hiring tutors to whom they pay only $3.65 per hour. There are limitations as to who can be hired for that kind of salary. The problem, at any rate, does not seem to be serious. The Center is not an EOPS-directed activity even though EOPS does put a substantial amount of money in there. It appears to be well organized, tutoring time is available to students, and there are serious efforts at accommodating student schedules. EOPS funds allocated to tutoring seem to be adequate. I examined the EOPS expenditures to date, and it appears that there is more than enough EOPS money to accommodate students through the rest of the year. And, as previously noted, with the Tutoring Coordinator working full time, there probably will be a greater likelihood of more fully meeting EOPS students' needs.

I have recommended to the EOPS Director that she meet with the Tutoring Coordinator to see if additional schedule arrangements could be made to better facilitate EOPS needs. There are a number of possibilities, but they would need to jointly discuss the feasibility of various additional alternatives. Two possibilities for improved service include: some group sessions; developing a reserve list of tutors who could come in at special hours or be on-call for odd-scheduled times. I have no specific recommendation but merely want to highlight this as an area of concern to students. Hopefully, through joint efforts, the tutoring program, already good,

could be made better.

Issue...Use of peer counselors. A second potential issue identified through the questionnaires and interviews is the manner of use of the peer counselors. Students are generally appreciative of the support provided by peer counselors. As you know, students are required to meet with a peer counselor once a month as a condition of their grant. However, it doesn't always happen that way. An examination of a random selection of student files seems to indicate much less peer counseling than prescribed. However, this might be a function of improper record keeping. At any rate, there is insufficient documentation that program plans regarding peer counseling time are being attended to.

Further, the number of students in the EOPS program does not appear to warrant the number of peer counselors on staff unless tney are to assume additional program functions. There has been a reduction in the number of participants from last year. There have been 120 grants thus far made this year, and another 30-40 people receive peer counseling. Thus, there appears to be a caseload of about 15-16 students per peer counselor. With the requirement of once a month peer counseling (15-30 minutes), this task does not appear to utilize the time of the peer counselors. I have suggested to the Director that she think about the way in which peer counselors work and consider extending their job responsibilities. One of the areas that was mentioned by one

of the members of the team was the use of peer counselors in recruitment functions to a greater extent than currently takes place.

Another aspect of the use of peer counselors is the late start-up of the peer counseling function. Apparently, the peer counseling didn't fully get under way until middle to late October. In part, this is because they just didn't get hired. I would suggest that a way be devised to get the peer counselors on the job and trained sooner: those first few weeks of the semester are really quite important, and peer counselors undoubtedly could have served a very valuable function.

A third area of concern is the role of the peer counselor in the Multi-Culture Center. The peer counselors are housed there because of the availability of space. But their role as EOPS staff sometimes becomes changed because of drop-ins, who just come into the Center and end up using the services for general information purposes. It is no fault of the peer counselors: they are there and they are accessible. While this is admirable and undoubtedly of great benefit to the college, I would like to caution about the use of EOPS resources for serving general college functions. I have discussed this matter with the Director and made some very simple-to-implement recommendations that could alleviate the problem.

Issue...Recruitment. The third area that I would mention that emerged from the interviews and to some extent from the prior questionnaires is recruitment. There is apparently a need for more extensive recruitment activities. Students that I interviewed were on campus already and then found to be EOPS-eligible, rather than specifically recruited for EOPS from high school. However, I make this statement with a note of caution; students sometimes don't know how they became informed about a program. They might not remember that someone spoke with them or gave them a tour of the campus. In that regard, I've suggested to the Director that she maintain better documentation about her visits to the high schools...the students she actually sees, who they are, and which of them really come here. This kind of documentation would help to subsequently improve her recruitment function.

Furthermore, as already noted with respect to the previous peer counselor comments, I have suggested that peer counselors might perform other functions, one of them being assistance on recruitment. The thought was that peer counselors might have recruitment responsibilities in the high schools from which they had come. They could spend two hours a week at the high school, providing assistance and information about the EOPS program at the college.

Final Comment

The EOPS program at College "F" is excellent. It provides

a valuable service to students at the College and generally performs its functions in an excellent manner. The staff is outstanding, demonstrating a high level of commitment and dedication. A few suggestions have been made in this narrative report, which pertain to improving an already-fine program.

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